THE DOWNFALL OF THE BAILIFFS: Or a Lash for your BUMMS.

WHEREIN

The oppressions, extortions, and villanies of Catch-Poles, Serjeants, Bayliffs, and Marshall-men, with their Yeomen, Followers, and under-Litter of Setting-Dogs, are fully exposed and detected in their proper colours.

By *Goodlove Freeman*, Esquire.

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I Am not ignorant, That *Officers* for the executing legal Processes are *necessary Evils* in a Common-wealth, and so are *Hang-men* too, and therefore so far as they perform their *Places* honestly according to the intent of their Institution, I have *nothing* to say to them; My business is to discover their villainous practices, which the Law is so far from justifying that it condemns them under severe penalties: Though yet the Devil too frequently help these his Servants so, That they escape and avoid them; And first I shall begin with the Serjeant as the civilest Man in the pack, for you must note there are degrees of Knaves, and a Fox is not altogether so ravenous as a Wolf though both are beasts of Prey;

A Serjeant, is so called *Quasi see Argent*, look you Rogue here's Money; for that is all the god he worships, and would undoe one of the twelve Companies to get a crown by it; The Counter-gate is his proper Kennel, and the miseries of poor Men, the Offals on which he feeds, yet the Cur often shifts his stand, and commonly lyes in Ambuscade behind the Lattice of some blind Bawdy Ale house, and if he spy his prey, out he leaps like a free-booter and rifles, or like a Bandogg worries; He does not carry his Captives directly to Hell (the Counter) but first torments them in a Purgatory hard by, where you must pay two shillings a night for a lousie bed and spend as much in Liquoring his Chops as would half pay the Debt; This he calls his civility, The English of which is, That you must pay him for it; If you seem to fear other Actions coming against you, he shall pretend to pitty you, and at last agrees for such a sum of Money to keep the matter private, and if you can make an end of this business to secure your retreat, which composition being paid him in hand, he is no sooner in possession of the Coal, but he locks you up, and runs with all speed to find out all that you owe any thing to, and tells them, if they do not strike now whilst the Iron is hot all's lost, that he is the only man that can secure you, but he will have so much money, which he gets, and comes back with these fresh Actions, which he keeps for a reserve, and all this while that he has been doing you this excellent service you must pay him for waiting on you. He let's you compose the first matter, and gets your money for this civility, but just as you are going out, drops another of the smallest actions on you, if you can raise Money or Friends to satisfie this, he has more Money of you for longer Attendance, and as you are going down stairs charges you again, Thus he picks your bones by degrees, till at last seeing your self unable to stern the Tide, and he finding your Pockets at low Ebb and that you can bleed no more, he delivers you over to Satan the Turnkey, where the Lord have mercy on your Soul, for to be sure they will have little enough on your body.

A common Bayliff exceeds a Serjeant as much as an Irish Mastiff, does a Spaniel in fierceness; He is a Raven that pecks not out Mens Eyes as others do, for all his spite is at their shoulders, and you were far better have the Night Mare ride you than he; These Land Pyrates cruise up and down *Holborn*, as thick as *Algier* and *Sally-men* in the *Mediterranean*, and carry those they take to a worse slavery, by how much an *English* Goaler is more cruel then the barbarous Turk; only now and the the *Gray-Innian* Common Wealth scour the Seas of these Rovers, and force them against their Wills to take in Fresh water at their Pump.

In the Countrey they are called Bums, being of the very skum and dregs of the people, Rascals that have generally escap'd the Gallows once or twice already very narrowly, and yet must at last come to it, for 'tis certain a Rope is their destiny;

Here 'tis sad to consider how they abuse and oppress poor Ignorant people, with their *Pose's* and Attachment out of the *County Court*, how they sweep away Peoples Goods and devour whole Families as fast as a *Dutch-man* eats butter'd Stock fish, how frequently they counterfeit *warrants* and so far abuse at once his *Majestie* good *Subjects*, and his Courts of *Kings Bench*, and *Common Plea's*, by confederacy between them and the next Neighbouring *Lawsplitter*, that in truth there is not a *Writ* taken out against *one* in *twenty*, of those they Arrest, though they always make the people pay for it, and that at excessive rates: He has there most times two or three Trades, a setter in the day time, and a Thief in the night, a Bailiff all the week, and an informer on the Sunday, and yet thrives no more than a Hogg that's Lowsy, but as he lives a Rogue, dies a Beggar.

A Marshalf-man is yet a more insufferable grievance, a false Die of the same Bale, but not the same Cut, for it runs somewhat higher and does more mischief, he is a perfect Blood hound that hunts upon the smallest scent, and worries all to Death that he lays hold on, The Circle this Devil is confined to, is twelve miles over, and in that circuit he commonly undoes above twelve hundred people a year, He plies on the Skirt of the Town amongst poor people, whom he quickly prefers to be absolute Beggars, for upon every petty quarrel, scolding bout, or Chandlers score

of

of four pence half penny, he sets them to Law to set himself on work, and as soon as he has Arrested one, perswades him to snap the other, who foolishly consents, and then they are both forced to lye at his mercy till they pawn their beds, or their Wives Petticoats to raise what Money he pleases to demand for the Arrests and his waiting; And that he may fleece them the more commodiously he keeps a Tipling-School, where he Imprisons them by his own Authority, and the *Succuba* his Wife shall ordinarily over-reckon you eight pence in a Shilling, and though you know it never so well, you dare say nothing because (forsooth) 'tis his kindness to keep you there, and not carry you over to the Lake of Perdition beyond the Water; This court was originally instituted only for the differences where one of the Parties was of His Majesties Houshold, and a Writ of Errour lay to reverse any Judgement if it were otherwise, But *Tempora mutantur*, I know not how 'tis come to pass (but sure I am 'tis most dishonourable and incongruous) That now nothing is more frequent than to see here a Chimney-sweeper prosecuting a Broom-man for breaking his head at Cudgels, and an Oyster wench suing a Kitchin-stuff woman for calling her draggle taill'd Trugmullion; For they extend their Jurisdiction, not only to all Persons but all things, so that shortly we shall have people sued for thinking scandalously of one another, and find that untoward looks will bear an Action of Assault and Battery in the Marshalses, 'tis certain several have been there arrested for six pence, and lain till their Fees and charges came to above thirty shillings, and the far greater part of the Suits commenced are for Trifles under 40 *s.* just Debt though they of course lay it at 4 *l.* 19 *s.* in the Writ, and what a deplorable thing is it that a Family shall be ruined, and a poor Man be buried alive for such an inconsiderable matter, which is yet further from being satisfied to the creditor than before.

As for the Yeomen, Folowers, and Setting Vermine, to all these worthy Officers, tney are such contemptible Rascals that they are not worth thinking on, We may call them the Hooks that hang under Water to choak the Fish, and their Masters the Quills above which pop down as soon as ever the Bait is swallowed, These Rats have

have Tails as long as the others, but their Teeth are more ſharp and they more hungry becauſe they do but ſnap and have not a full half ſhare of the Booty; Neceſſity makes them valiant for they will greedily take a cut with a ſword, and ſuck more Silver out of the wound than a Surgeon ſo that commonly they die with their Guts ript up, or elſe the Devil by a ſudden ſtab, or a fatal Turn ſends a *Habeas corpus cum Anima* for um;

We might ſpeak particularly of all the Tribe of Raſcallity belonging to *Finsbury*, St. *Katherines*, the *Chink*, *White-chapple*, and the reſt of the Devils Pepper-boxes, but then I ſhould ſpend too much time on the Villains. I will only ſtep in and make one complement to Mr Goaler, and ſo depart without asking any leave from the Turnkey.

A Goaler is a creature miſtaken in the making, for he ſhould be a Tyger, but the ſhape being thought too terrible, it is covered, and he wears the Vizard of a Man, yet retains the qualities of his former fierceneſs, curriſhneſs and ravening, his conſcience and his ſhackles he hangs up together, and they are made very near of the ſame Mettle, ſaving that the one is harder then the other, and hath one property above Iron that it never melts; he diſtills Money out of Poor Mens tears and grows fat by their curſes, his Ears are ſtopt to the cryes of others and Gods to his, and good reaſon, for lay the Life of a Man in one ſcale, and his Fees in the other, he would caſt away the firſt, to get the ſecond; and in brief, is one that can look for no mercy (if he deſires Juſtice to be done him) for he ſhews none.

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